

Claims

1. A method of managing content for distribution comprising: a delegator identifying content to be worked upon and delegating the work to a delegatee; sending to
5 the delegatee a manifest describing the delegated work, the manifest defining the extent of work to be done; receiving content from the delegatee together with a returned manifest, each manifest and the associated content being digitally identified by the delegatee; the returned content being accepted only upon verification of the digital identification.

10 2. A method according to claim 1 in which, prior to assigning content to a delegate, a public cryptographic key is obtained from the delegatee.

3. A method according to claim 2 in which the returned manifest is verified by a digital signature of the delegatee.

15 4. A method according to claim 3 in which the digital signature is verified by decryption using the delegatee's public key.

5. A method according to claim 3 in which the digital signature is signed in accordance with the X509 certificate structure.

6. A method according to claim 1 in which each file that accompanies a manifest is digitally identified and is accepted only upon verification of the digital identification.

20 7. A method according to claim 1 in which there is received from the delegatee a request for a manifest describing existing content that is required by the delegatee to complete their delegated task.

8. A method according to claim 7 in which the manifest is sent to the delegatee in response to the request.

9. A method according to claim 1 in which the delegator maintains a list of delegated items.

10. A method according to claim 9 in which for each delegated item, the list includes a list of content that has been delegated.

5 11. A method according to claim 9 in which for each delegated item, the list specifies a file system path that points to a root location of the content that has been delegated.

12. A method according to claim 1 in which the manifest specifies whether the delegatee can act as a delegator in respect of part or all of the delegated content.

10 13. A method according to claim 1 operating on a client-server computer system.

14. A method according to claim 13 in which the delegator operates as a server to one or more client delegates.

15. A method according to claim 13 in which each of the delegator and the or each delegatee are clients.

15 16. A method according to claim 15 in which a server handles transfer of files and manifests between the clients.

17. A method according to claim 15 in which the server or servers communicate over a network link.

20 18. A method according to claim 15 in which a user produces content on a computer that runs a client application.

19. A method according to claim 18 in which the client application co-operates with a server application to ensure that the content on the server computer is identical to the content on the client computer.

25 20. A method according to claim 1 in which each manifest is encoded in extensible mark-up language.

21. A method according to claim 1 further including a step of making content received from a delegatee available on an externally accessible publication server.

22. A method according to claim 21 in which the publication server is a web server.

5 23. A method according to claim 22 in which the web server is accessible over the Internet or an intranet.

24. A method according to claim 1 in which, in the event that a user produces a new content set the differences between the new content and the current are determined, and from that differences, a list of tasks is generated that have to be completed so that the content will be mirrored on the remote computer and generates a manifest accordingly.

10 25. A method according to claim 24 in which the tasks in the list of tasks are executed.

26. A client/server computer system operating to perform a method according to claim 1.

15 27. A client/server computer system for managing content for distribution comprising: a server, one or more delegator clients, and one or more delegatee clients, the or each delegator client being operative to identify to the server content to be worked upon and a delegatee client to whom the work should be delegated; the server operative: to send to the delegatee client a manifest describing the delegated work, the manifest
20 defining the extent of work to be done, to receive content from the delegatee client together with a returned manifest, and to accept the returned content only upon having verified each manifest and the associated content being digitally identified by the delegatee.

25 28. A system according to claim 27 in which the server has storage for storing cryptographic information relating to each client.

29. A system according to claim 27 in which the server is operative to accept content from a client only in the event that the content is accompanied by a recognised cryptographic identifier.

30. A system according to claim 29 in which the server is operative to verify that the content is accompanied by a digital signature that can be authenticated by stored cryptographic information relating to the client.

31. A system according to claim 28 in which the server identifies content to a client by sending a manifest to the client.

32. A system according to claim 31 in which content is returned to the server by a client accompanied by a manifest authenticated by cryptographic information.

33. A system according to claim 27 which further includes networking components for conveyance of data between the server and the clients.

34. A system according to claim 27 in which the server includes a content store for storage of a hierarchical set of content.

35. A system according to claim 34 in which the content to be delegated comprises part of the hierarchical content set.

36. A system according to claim 27 which further includes a publication server for distribution of content in response to remote requests.

37. A system according to claim 36 in which the publication server is a web server.

38. A client system for use in a client/server computer system according to claim 27.

39. A server system for use in a client/server computer system according to claim 27.

40. A computer program product for operating a client or a server to perform a method according to claim 1.

5 41. A server for maintaining a content set for serving to a remote client wherein each file in the content set is associated with a digital signature, in which the system is operational to verify that files in the content set correspond to the digital signature, and deny access to any file for which the signature does not correspond.